

**COACHELLA CANAL AREA  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE  
(Alternative D)**

Elements	Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan Preferred Alternative (Alternative D)
<b>GENERAL MANAGEMENT ISSUE CATEGORY</b>	
General management strategy for Coachella Canal Area lands	<p>Continue to operate the lands within the study area for the primary purposes authorized by the Boulder Canyon Project Act (Project).</p> <p>Continue to manage lands according to Bureau of Reclamation Policies and Directives and Standards; Federal laws, rules and regulations; Executive orders; and State and county laws, regulations, and ordinances.</p> <p>Continue to cooperate with adjacent landowners to ensure compatible uses.</p> <p>Continue to conduct site-specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance for proposed land uses to ensure that surface and ground water quality and other natural resources are protected.</p> <p>Continue to seek non-Federal entities to manage recreation on Coachella Canal Area lands. (Also see Partnerships Issue Category.)</p> <p>Consider soil conditions and other limiting factors and adjacent land uses when placing future facilities on lands within the study area.</p> <p>Work with Coachella Valley Recreation and Park District (CVRPD), Riverside County, and other potential partners that are qualified, to expand a limited number of recreation opportunities on lands within the study area.</p> <p>Ensure that public use and any recreation facility development are consistent with the goals and objectives of the RMP and other approved planning documents.</p> <p>Ensure that land management decisions are made for the benefit of the Project and the general public.</p> <p>Conduct periodic land management reviews and other monitoring efforts to ensure lands are managed pursuant to existing agreements and land use authorizations.</p> <p>Monitor the variety of land uses to identify user and user conflicts and investigate corrective measures to prevent further conflicts, if necessary.</p> <p>Implement Resource Management Plan (RMP) management actions within the 10-year planning period.</p>
<b>LAND USE ISSUE CATEGORY</b>	
Issuance of new land use authorizations (licenses, leases, and permits) and agreements	<p>Continue to follow existing land use authorization application requirements and procedures.</p> <p>Continue to allow only those land uses that do not adversely affect Reclamation and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) Project features or the delivery of water to Coachella Canal water users.</p> <p>Continue current cooperation with adjacent landowners to ensure compatible land uses.</p>

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan Preferred Alternative (Alternative D)</b>
	<p>Continue to prohibit private, exclusive use of Reclamation lands within the study area.</p> <p>Continue to prohibit land uses that adversely affect Indian trust assets unless proper mitigation measures are achieved and all environmental clearances are obtained. Continue to avoid Indian sacred sites and traditional cultural properties when issuing land use authorizations.</p> <p>Continue to prohibit land uses that adversely affect threatened and endangered or other special status species or critical habitat unless proper mitigation measures are achieved and all environmental clearances are obtained.</p> <p>Issue future land use authorizations that allow for limited developments that do not adversely affect natural resources and Project purposes.</p> <p>Enter into agreements with non-Federal government entities for planning, developing, and managing additional recreation facilities and opportunities.</p>
Continuance of existing land use authorizations and agreements	<p>Continue to honor the terms and conditions of the agreement with CVWD in perpetuity for care, operation, maintenance, and replacement of the Coachella Canal. (See Partnerships Issue Category.)</p> <p>Continue to honor the terms and conditions of the agreement with Riverside County that expires in 2021 for recreation management of Lake Cahuilla. (See Partnerships Issue Category.)</p> <p>Continue to honor the terms and conditions of the agreement with CVRPD that expires in 2026 for management of three recreation sites within the study area. (See Partnerships Issue Category.)</p> <p>Continue to honor the terms and conditions of existing land use authorizations addressing, among other things, bridges, access roads, crossing agreements, fences, power and transmission lines, telephone lines, and water and power pipelines.</p> <p>Phase out land uses that are not compatible with Project purposes.</p>
Use of easement lands	Continue to follow the necessary procedures to authorize land uses on lands where easements were acquired from underlying fee owners.
Noxious weed management	<p>Initiate a comprehensive weed control program.</p> <p>Rehabilitate damaged and degraded habitat, including unauthorized off highway vehicle (OHV) use areas and other small areas of past intense use.</p>
Fire management	Follow the updated 2001 Federal Fire Management Policy and the Secretary of the Interior's 2001 policy letter, and develop a fire management plan for all Coachella Canal Area lands.

#### **PARTNERSHIP ISSUE CATEGORY**

Coachella Valley Recreation and Park District	<p>Continue to cooperate with CVRPD in its effort to operate and maintain three separate recreation areas within the study area. (See Land Use Issue Category.)</p> <p>Cooperate with CVRPD in developing additional facilities within the three areas currently under lease to CVRPD.</p>
---	--

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan Preferred Alternative (Alternative D)</b>
Coachella Valley Water District	Continue to cooperate with CVWD in its responsibilities for the care, operation, and maintenance of the Coachella Canal protective works and water delivery system. (See Boulder Canyon Project Purposes and Land Use Issue Categories.)
Riverside County	<p>Continue to cooperate with the Riverside County in its effort to operate and maintain a county park at Lake Cahuilla. (See Land Use Issue Category.)</p> <p>Cooperate with Riverside County to improve recreation opportunities within the existing county park at Lake Cahuilla.</p> <p>Authorize expansion of recreation facilities managed by county. (See parcels O and P element under Recreation Management Issue Category.)</p>
Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District	Coordinate mosquito abatement activities within the study area with the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District.
Potential recreation partnerships	Explore opportunities to work with qualified recreation partners to manage additional recreation activities within the study area.
Trail development partnerships	Expand efforts to seek trail partnerships with local government entities and local trail user interest groups to help identify alternatives and local needs and expectations to provide a limited number of developed multi-use trails within the study area.
Bureau of Land Management	<p>Continue to cooperate with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on issues of mutual concern and in identifying lands within the study area that may be returned to BLM for its management.</p> <p>Continue negotiations with BLM to make available a portion of parcel R (16 acres) to proposed developer through a revocation of withdrawn lands to BLM and a subsequent land exchange.</p> <p>Cooperate with BLM to control unauthorized OHV use on areas with shared boundaries.</p> <p>Work with BLM to address legal public access across Reclamation lands or interest in lands so that access to recreational trails and public use areas is not hindered.</p>
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)	<p>Continue to consult with the Service pursuant to the Endangered Species Act.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Service and other concerned entities on mutually agreed upon tamarisk removal and mesquite restoration projects.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Service on possible land exchanges that are mutually beneficial and when such exchanges would not adversely affect CVWD's care, operation, and maintenance of the Coachella Canal.</p>
Cities of Indio, La Quinta, Coachella, Thermal, and Mecca	Continue to work with local governments within the Coachella Valley on matters of mutual concern.
California Department of Fish and Game	<p>Continue current level of cooperation on special status species and habitat management.</p> <p>Work with California Department of Fish and Game to develop and implement inventory, monitoring, and protection plans for special status species and habitats.</p>

Elements	Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan Preferred Alternative (Alternative D)
----------	--

#### **BOULDER CANYON PROJECT ACT (COACHELLA UNIT) PURPOSES ISSUE CATEGORY**

Primary purposes	CVWD would continue to operate the Coachella Canal Area for the primary purpose of delivering water for agriculture.
Uses not adversely affecting Project purposes	CVWD would continue to cooperate with Reclamation in efforts to process land use requests that are compatible with, and do not adversely affect, Project purposes as well as natural resource conservation and protection.
Borrow pits	Reclamation and CVWD would retain parcels B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, and R for potential borrow pits to be used for Project purposes.  Acceptable stabilization techniques would be used for active borrow pits to ensure that offsite impacts are avoided.  Unused or abandoned borrow pits would be reclaimed after a reasonable period of non-use.
Water treatment facility	Reclamation and CVWD also would retain parcel H for a potential water treatment facility for the benefit of the Project and water conservation purposes.
Terminal reservoir (Lake Cahuilla)	Reclamation and CVWD would retain parcels O and P to be used in conjunction with Lake Cahuilla.
Canal access roads	CVWD would continue to use all canal access roads for operation and maintenance purposes.
Dikes	CVWD would continue to use parcels G, I, J, K, L, M, Q, R, S, and T for protective dike purposes.
Electrical substation	Reclamation and CVWD would continue to retain parcel F for Imperial Irrigation District's management of an electrical substation.
Parcel U	Reclamation and CVWD would continue to retain a portion of parcel U for Project purposes. Refer to page 51, last bullet, for further explanation of parcel U.

#### **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ISSUE CATEGORY**

Cultural resources	<p>As necessary, continue to consult with California State Preservation Office under section 106/110 of National Historic Preservation Act.</p> <p>Continue to conduct opportunistic inspections of sites and locales as personnel and time are available.</p> <p>Continue to consult with area Indian tribes and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) concerning Indian trust assets, Indian sacred sites, and traditional cultural properties.</p> <p>When actions will affect a site eligible for the <i>National Register of Historic Places</i> (Register) or when planning actions that could result in significant new impacts to Coachella Canal Area lands, consult with appropriate Indian tribes to determine if they have cultural resource concerns or are aware of traditional cultural properties.</p> <p>Complete site-specific investigations, as needed, to enable implementation of resource management plan development and restoration efforts when compatible with current project needs and purposes.</p> <p>On a case-by-case basis, or as required as part of a mitigation requirement, implement interpretation at sites for public interest and education.</p>
--------------------	---

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan Preferred Alternative (Alternative D)</b>
Aeolian (windblown) sand habitat and associated special status species protection and management	<p>Inventory all sand habitat types to ascertain presence/absence, habitat suitability for special status species, and restoration potential.</p> <p>Avoid or minimize developments and land use that could affect suitable habitat.</p> <p>Conduct long-term monitoring of suitable habitat.</p> <p>In cooperation with other entities, increase efforts to protect suitable habitat from OHV use and other ground-disturbing activities.</p> <p>As necessary, provide fencing to protect suitable and occupied habitat for special status species</p> <p>If appropriate, develop a restoration plan in cooperation with other entities.</p> <p>Conduct environmental compliance and Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation for any projects that could affect habitat.</p> <p>If needed, mitigate and compensate for impacts of development activity on suitable and occupied habitat.</p>
Undisturbed desert shrub habitat	<p>Avoid impacts to undisturbed sites.</p> <p>Conduct environmental compliance and ESA consultation for any projects that could affect habitat.</p>
Desert wash and other habitats that provide linkages and biological corridors	<p>Avoid developments that would affect the biological integrity of desert washes and potential corridors.</p> <p>Conduct environmental compliance and ESA consultation for any projects that could affect habitat.</p>
Peninsular bighorn habitat sheep and disturbance buffer	<p>Conduct environmental compliance and ESA consultation for any projects that could affect habitat.</p> <p>Avoid developments and land use that would eliminate buffer and suitable habitat.</p> <p>In cooperation with other entities, increase efforts to protect suitable habitat from OHV use and other ground-disturbing activities.</p>
Cottonwood-willow oases	<p>Inventory all cottonwood willow habitat to ascertain presence/absence, habitat suitability for special status species, and restoration potential.</p> <p>Avoid or minimize developments and land use that could affect suitable habitat.</p> <p>Conduct long-term monitoring of suitable habitat.</p>

#### **RECREATION MANAGEMENT ISSUE CATEGORY**

Carrying capacity/ public demand	Reclamation's recreation partners would provide appropriate information related to social, physical, environmental, or facility capacities for proposed developments.
Recreation planning	<p>Existing and potential qualified recreation partners would prepare and submit appropriate planning documents to Reclamation prior to any facility development.</p> <p>When planning for recreation development, follow up-to-date design standards and criteria.</p>
Off highway vehicle use	Eliminate OHV use except for emergency situations. (Note: All Reclamation lands are closed to OHV use unless officially opened through a public involvement and planning process.)

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan Preferred Alternative (Alternative D)</b>
	<p>Close and rehabilitate OHV roads and unauthorized use areas.</p> <p>Restrict the public to existing public roads.</p> <p>In cooperation with other entities, install needed fencing and barriers to prevent future OHV use.</p>
Multi-use trail development	<p>In cooperation with a single non-Federal government entity or a variety of entities, authorize construction of a limited number of multi-use trails using strict development criteria to ensure that trail and trail users do not adversely affect natural resources, wildlife, critical habitat, or CVWD Project features.</p> <p>Design portions of trails to accommodate a variety of uses, such as hiking, biking, and horseback riding.</p> <p>Ensure trail development follows appropriate design standards, including Americans with Disabilities Act Standards.</p>
Interpretation	<p>Encourage existing and potential recreation partners to provide interpretation of the natural resources, wildlife, and Project features to better educate the public. (See Public Information Issue Category.)</p> <p>Reclamation and its partners would provide an appropriate level of interpretation as required to fulfill mitigation measures associated with Project and recreation facility development.</p>
Retention of lands for existing recreation purposes.	Reclamation and CVWD would retain parcels E, K, R, and portions of S and T for CVRPD recreation management purposes.
Parcels A, B, C, D, and K	Continue to use as open space.
Parcels E and F	Continue to make available as open space.
Parcels E, K, R and portions of S and T	<p>Continue to use as open space and use by CVRPD.</p> <p>Consider proposals from potential qualified recreation partners to provide for passive types of recreation opportunities and to provide assistance enforcing unauthorized OHV use.</p>
Parcels O and P	Authorize expansion of facilities managed by Riverside County for county park at Lake Cahuilla.
Other fee, withdrawn, and easement lands within study area not identified as a lettered parcel	Depending on land status, Reclamation would assess plans submitted by existing and potential qualified recreation partners for using remaining Project lands for outdoor recreation purposes.

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Coachella Canal Area Resource Management Plan Preferred Alternative (Alternative D)</b>
-----------------	--

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ISSUE CATEGORY**

Public information and education	<p>Continue current level of public information and education.</p> <p>Reclamation would encourage existing and potential partners to provide an appropriate level of interpretative services to inform and educate the public. (See interpretation element under Recreation Management Issue Category.)</p> <p>Encourage existing and future partners to use a variety of media to communicate with the public, including printed materials, maps, photographs, brochures, and Web sites.</p> <p>Encourage partners to provide additional programs for public enjoyment (e.g., wildlife observation and interpretative programs).</p>
Signing	<p>Inventory signing needs and, as needed, post bilingual signs with rules and regulations regarding the use of Reclamation lands.</p> <p>As needed, post bilingual OHV closure signs at areas that have been closed to unauthorized OHV users.</p>

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE CATEGORY**

Enforcement of rules and regulations	Increase efforts to enforce rules and regulations to discourage unauthorized use within the study area and promote proactive law enforcement activities.
Mosquito abatement	Cooperate with the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District in its effort to reduce or eliminate conditions conducive for mosquito breeding. (See Partnerships.)
Crime Witness Program	Promote the Crime Witness Protection Program.
Trash removal	<p>Increase efforts to remove existing trash from Coachella Canal Area lands.</p> <p>Increase efforts to keep Coachella Canal Area lands free of trash through signing and strict enforcement.</p>
Recreation development	Take no additional action, except to continue to ensure that visitor health and safety is the main focus during facility planning.
Signs	As needed, post bilingual warning signs.
Fencing	Install proper fencing to protect the health and safety of the public and Project features and structures.

<sup>1</sup> Passive recreation is defined as recreational opportunities that occur in a natural setting and that require minimal development or facilities. The importance of the environment or setting for the activities is greater than in developed recreation settings. Examples of passive recreation activities include walking, bicycling, horseback riding, bird watching, and photography.

<sup>2</sup> Open space is defined as a parcel of land that has public value because the land offers important opportunities for recreation. Open space may also have value as a visual amenity to the landscape or backdrop of an outdoor natural setting.